

From: [Jon Entine](#)
To: [Rebecca Randall](#)
Cc: [Pamela Ronald](#); [Alison Van Eenennaam](#)
Subject: GeneTrends AG story/high priority/unintended consequences of GMO free and ban GMO movements
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 8:47:12 AM

Rebecca,

Title: When farmers move to Non GMO model, pesticide use often soars

The gist of the piece would be that the public fears over GMOs has had a number of implications, including the sharp rise in organic food production (albeit from a very low base) but also a huge jump in a developing “non GMO”/GMO free” food market. That is, there is a sizable segment of food production that is not organic but uses conventional farming methods.

Those farmers, and food companies, recognize that not only are prices jumping for organic crops/foods, but also for non-GMO crops/foods. Why? Because the consumer assumes that just because something is non GMO it is both safer to eat and better for the environment. That’s the consequence in part of the successful campaign, spearheaded by the organic industry, to demonize anything GMOs. We know the organic claims are overheated (no real evidence that organic foods are safer to eat or more sustainable to grow). But the situation is actually perverse when it comes to non-GMO crops and products. Farmers and producers using this moniker to piggyback on the anti-GMO perceptions, riding organics green coattails, but evidence suggests that many crops/products labeled non GMO are actually demonstrably less safe and more chemically intensive than either organics or GMO crops.

So that’s the idea of the story.

Pam Ronald reminded me of an article that appeared last year on NPR about exactly this, by Dan Charles:

"How American food companies go GMO-free in a GMO world"
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/02/04/269479079/how-american-food-companies-go-gmo-free-in-a-gmo-world>

You can definitely lace in the story of the Clarkson farm...

The kicker here is this: while farmers can sell their crops for twice the price with the GMO free label, farmers pursuing growing corn (and soybeans) that are not Bt and not herbicide tolerant have reverted BACK to using far more toxic herbicides and pesticides! In other words, the perversity of the the GMO demonization efforts are real: GMO crops in US have resulted in a 10-fold decrease in the use of insecticides largely as the result of the Bt crops (USDA, spring 2014 report, mentioned in numerous GLP stories and often cited by Pam Ronald) and a substitution of much milder toxic herbicides. So anti-GMOers are winning the battle—they get to buy ‘non GMO products—but they are losing the war big time: customers pay as much as twice as much for these crops and foods AND the environment is taking a huge hit.

It’s a great irony story of unintended consequences.

Please interview Alison [REDACTED]. This is what she wrote yesterday to Pam and me about this:

On Apr 28, 2015, at 8:36 AM, Alison Van Eenennaam
<alvaneennaam@ucdavis.edu> wrote:

I know this to be a fact as I have spoken to corn farmers in [REDACTED] county who were growing RR-corn and had to switch to conventional as a result of the GMO ban and were as a result going to be using more toxic herbicides - the farmer told me so - also this concurs with dramatic decrease in more toxic herbicides that resulted after introduction of GM crops - [REDACTED] - farm advisor in [REDACTED] County has spoken to me about this - while we are at it perhaps we can go into the welfare implications of withholding treatment from sick animals as required by their "antibiotic free" pledge - I have witnessed a steer with pinkeye whose eye exploded as antibiotics were not allowed to treat him as he was on a "natural program"....bottom line is avoiding Chipotle is the environmentally and ethically thing right thing to do as their requirements lack integrity.

From: Alison Van Eenennaam
To: [Pamela Ronald](#)
Cc: [Jon Entine](#)
Subject: RE: Daily Beast interviews Eenennaam and Entine
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 10:36:00 AM

Sure - I have some really graphic pictures too....

PS OK so that was you, thought it was but was not sure if you were a swimmer!

From: Pamela Ronald
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 10:33 AM
To: Alison Van Eenennaam
Cc: Jon Entine
Subject: Re: Daily Beast interviews Eenennaam and Entine

very interesting. Can I circulate your email to the sci policy group to see if anyone wants to pick up on this? It would be a great story for the scientific american blog. The students could all the farmers and interview them. If they need help, we could help them write it.

I will try to write something about this in the revision of our book (that I am having a tough time finding time for).

nice to see you bright and early this morning!
P

On Apr 28, 2015, at 8:36 AM, Alison Van Eenennaam
<alvaneennaam@ucdavis.edu> wrote:

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From: Pamela Ronald
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 7:48 AM
To: Jon Entine; Alison Van Eenennaam
Subject: Re: Daily Beast interviews Eenennaam and Entine

Sorry I could not send the direct link
My computer is not working so am using my phone
If you can't find it pls let me know

I suggest we publicize this fact (once we get the details) and then organize a

chipotle boycott

All the best,
Pam

<http://CropGeneticsInnovation.org>

On Apr 28, 2015, at 7:37 AM, Jon Entine <jon@jonentine.com> wrote:

Do you have a link to that story?

On Apr 28, 2015, at 10:31 AM, Pamela Ronald
<pcronald@ucdavis.edu> wrote:

Great story!

I would like one of us or our students to follow up on
Dan Charles NPR report that farmers growing
"nonGMO" corn in the south US have reverted back to
using more toxic herbicides and pesticides (and sell their
crops for twice the price)

All the best,
Pam

<http://CropGeneticsInnovation.org>

On Apr 28, 2015, at 7:16 AM, Jon Entine
<jon@jonentine.com> wrote:

Daily Beast quoting Jon and Alison today on
Chipotle story:
We're Paranoid About GMO Foods Because of
Pseudo-Science
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/28/we-re-paranoid-about-gmo-foods-because-of-pseudo-science.html>